



Springmoor Grange School

Packed Lunch and Snacks from Home Policy

Approved	November 2025
Review Date	November 2026

School Food – Policy for Packed Lunches and snacks (brought in from home)

Introduction

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. Schools are an influential setting and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of pupils.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Packed lunches can contribute to almost a third of a child's weekly food intake and therefore need to be balanced and nutritious in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance and Early Years Reforms 2025.

Aims

- To ensure that packed lunches (brought in from home) reflect the healthy eating curriculum.
- To ensure that all packed lunches meet the nutritional needs of children.
- To minimise the risk of allergies and choking incidents.
- To support parents and carers as partners in providing healthy food for their children.

Rationale

- Schools are required to positively promote the health and well being of its pupils. Work around healthy eating is a high priority.
- The content of lunchboxes needs to reflect the requirement of schools to meet minimum food and nutrition standards for school meals.
- The contents of lunchboxes in some schools can be extremely unhealthy, recent audits of lunchboxes have shown that in the main they contain foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt, and very few fruit and vegetables.
- To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve the overall nutrition of pupils
- The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches and food intake can include poor growth, tooth decay, obesity, anaemia, constipation, poor concentration and behavioural problems which may have an impact on a child's learning.
- The longer term effects of a poor diet in childhood can be an increased risk of stroke, cancer, heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

Objectives

- To improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in schools and the eating habits of children at lunchtimes
- To develop an awareness in pupils, parents, staff and the wider community that the school takes a pro-active approach to promoting healthy eating.
- To encourage healthy eating habits in childhood that can influence health and well being in later life.
- To ensure that food brought into school (packed lunches) reflects and is in line with the EYFS Nutrition Guidance and EYs Reforms 2025.

Implementation

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole school approach to food and healthy eating.

- Children's packed lunches should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items from the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency).

Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta

These starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

Fruit and Vegetables

These foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more.

Milk and Dairy foods

These foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch

Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans

These foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods

Foods and drinks high in fat and / or sugar

It is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and / or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect young people from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. This is why sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks are no longer available in schools. Please support your school by not including these items in a packed lunch.

Drinks – any drinks provided in lunch boxes **should only** include either plain water, milk (semi-skimmed), unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with food standards for school meals, packed lunches should not contain the following:

- Fizzy/sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans
- Chocolate coated products, sweets and confectionary
- Chewing gum
- Any product containing nuts

Early Years Foundation Stage (2-5 years old)

Guidance on preparing snacks from home

Children are welcome to bring a snack from home, which they can eat during morning play time. In line with the guidance above, the snack should be a piece of fruit or vegetable. For those children who do not eat fruit, a plain biscuit is permitted. Children can also bring a bottle of water to drink.

To minimise the risk of choking, parents and carers are strongly advised to prepare snacks and packed lunch foods in a ways that is safe for young children.

This includes:

- Cutting round foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, sausages and carrots into long quarters rather than small round pieces, which can block the airway.
- Avoiding hard, small or sticky foods that are known choking hazards unless they are appropriately prepared.
- Ensuring foods are soft enough for the child's developmental stage and chewing ability.
- Staff will be alert to signs of choking and will follow established procedures if a choking incident occurred.
- Ongoing communication with parents and carers will support the safe introduction of new foods and textures in line with each child's development.

Items below are NOT to be included in a school packed lunch for children under 5 due to the risk of choking:

- Popcorn-all varieties
- Marshmallows
- Jelly cubes
- Ice cubes

Supervision:

- Children in EYFS must always be supervised whilst eating: staff will be alert to any signs of choking.
- For children from 2-5 years old members of staff/lunchstaff will sit with them whilst they eat their lunch.
- Children will be seated safely while eating, in a designated area with minimal distractions.

Allergies

Parents must inform the school of any food allergies, intolerances or special dietary requirements their child has. Staff will share allergy information with all relevant staff to ensure safety.

Due to allergies, no nut products are allowed in packed lunches. Springmoor Grange School is a no nuts Federation.

Waste and Disposal

The school will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake with the school.

Promotion of Healthy Packed Lunches

There will be ongoing promotion of the need to provide healthy packed lunches through:

- Pupil, parent / carers newsletters
- Whole School / Packed Lunch Policy
- Curriculum content
- Discussion through School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG)
- School website

Packed Lunch Containers

It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to provide an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures after a period of time can have increased levels of bacteria in them.

Storage of Packed Lunches

The school will provide storage area / facilities for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However the school cannot provide cooled storage areas and therefore cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into school.

Dining Facilities for Pupils Bringing Packed Lunch

The school will provide an appropriate area where pupils who choose to bring packed lunches can eat.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will carry out monitoring of packed lunch provision - where there may be concerns over a child's food / nutrition intake and / or content of packed lunches, this can be dealt with timely and sensitively.

OFSTED are required to report on how the school promotes the personal development and wellbeing of all pupils – this may include food provision including packed lunches brought into school.

The Local Authority will work with the school to review packed lunch provision and will provide advice and support to members of the school community.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools agreed policy review process. In addition any major legislative or governmental changes regarding school food may lead to this policy being amended

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.
Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/> and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (30g) contains:

	Energy	Total fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar
100g	100kcal	10g	5g	1g	10g
100g	100kcal	10g	5g	1g	10g
100g	100kcal	10g	5g	1g	10g
100g	100kcal	10g	5g	1g	10g

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values are set on 100g, 100ml or 100kcal

Choose foods lower
in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS